

sermon study summary

Not In My Church

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God made each of us unique. He desires to use our unique gifts, our differences, and even our weakness as we serve together in the body of Christ.

God hates captivity, so we should too. God stopped at nothing in pursuit of freedom for us.

That's the good news of the Gospel. He sent Jesus to die on a cross to pay the price for our sins so that we wouldn't have to live in captivity anymore. What an amazing gift!

Jesus' suffering requires a response. We must claim the freedom He died to give us.

Our response to accept this free gift must be three-fold: **DECLARE:** Speak it. **BELIEVE:** Trust it. **CONFESS:** Admit it.

The Bible says: "If you **DECLARE** with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and **BELIEVE** in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). "If we **CONFESS** our sins, he (God) is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery, and it's a direct attack on God's plan and design. Because we are made in the image of God, we have meaning, we have purpose, we are patterned after His sacredness, and His fingerprints are on us. When we are in bondage, whether that is because of someone's sin against us, because of the impact of sin on our lives, or because of our own sinful choices, it grieves the freedom-loving heart of God.

We must take a stand against the crime of human trafficking because of Jesus' example. Time and again He stood up for women, which wasn't the norm in His culture's society.

Human trafficking creates inequality. A society in which certain members can be bought or sold cannot, by nature, be an equal society. Prostitution and human trafficking are modern day slavery, which breaks the heart of God.

Here's the reality of slavery in Canada today: The average age of first being trafficked in Canada is 13 years old. 94% of victims in Canada are girls and women. Most traffickers in Canada are men. Most of those who purchase access to the bodies of victims are men.

Both sexes were made in the image of God, and therefore are of equal value to God. Jesus shed his blood to pay the price for all our freedom – male or female. It is impossible to experience true freedom apart from Jesus. Unless our efforts to bring freedom include Him and His plan, at best they are band-aids. True and lasting emancipation can be found only in the freedom purchased on the cross with the blood of Jesus Christ.

God instructs us to care for those in need with the same love that we would serve Him, the one who laid His life on the line for our sake. The fight against human trafficking provides the Church an opportunity to show our city, our nation, human trafficking victims, and the world that we are all precious and loved because God first loved us. Advocating for freedom from human trafficking and slavery is an opportunity to disrupt one of Canada's fastest growing crimes, and in the process, gently and respectfully, to share the hope we have in Christ, as we support survivors of this crime, and together, build into the lives God intended us all to live – lives of freedom.

Does God want you to **get involved** in organizations like Not In My City, Her Victory and BridgeNorth? **Pray** for those who are working to end human trafficking.

THE WORD (NIV)

Genesis 1:27

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Jeremiah 29:11-14

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Luke 4:18-19

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

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We recognize that this is a sensitive topic for some. To honor and respect your group members, please keep what is shared within your group confidential. This creates a safe space to acknowledge past hurts and support one another in the journey toward healing.

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. In what ways do you see spiritual or physical captivity in the world today?
2. How would you define freedom?

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Read Genesis 1:27, Jeremiah 29:11-14, Luke 4:18-19, John 10:7-11, 1 John 1:9. What do these verses say about how God views our human dignity regardless of our culture, beliefs and world views, what Jesus has done for us, and how He wants us to respond to Him? How can we view every person in the same way God does?
4. Read John 3:16, Gal 5:1 and Rom 10:9. God, Jesus and believers each had to act to bring about our freedom. Where else in the Bible does God/Jesus act to free us? How did he do it? What was humanity's part?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. Read James 1:27 and Proverbs 31:8-9. In what simple, practical ways can believers do to stand against human trafficking?
6. How is God asking your group to pray, support, advocate, or otherwise get involved with anti-human trafficking organizations such as HER Victory, BridgeNorth, and/or Not in My City?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

This week, take time to learn about modern slavery happening in our city, country, and around the world. Visit this link: [https://cchurch.ca/global/human trafficking](https://cchurch.ca/global/human%20trafficking) to learn more about HER Victory, #NotInMyCity, and BridgeNorth. You'll find online courses, workshops, and specific ways to pray for the fight against human trafficking, as well as for the organizations and individuals working to support victims.

THE WORD (NIV) cont'd

John 10:7-11 ⁷Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. ¹⁰They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹¹The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Romans 10:9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Proverbs 31:8-9 ⁸Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.

⁹Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, David McMillin, Sandi Somers, Gene and Karen Gibbs, and Jorel Quemuel

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